

NI Bulletin

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We begin this month with a discussion of coins from a small region in France.

And end with an announcement of our auction. Hopefully, you will find something of interest.

As usual, all submissions are welcome

Joseph Uphoff
Editor

THE COINAGE OF CHATEAU-REGNAULT

Notes on this insufficiently studied coinage and an unpublished 1617 billon 12 Kreuzer

by Christian Charlet, translated from the French by Robert Ronus LM # 139

Château-Regnault (or Château-Renaud) is a town of less than 3000 people on the river Meuse in the Ardennes region in NE France, close to Belgium. For a small town (today merged with Bogny-sur-Meuse), it has a lot of history and numismatics.

According to the 12th century poem *Quatre fils Aymon*, the four Aymon brothers had to flee the court of Charlemagne on their magical horse Bayard and sought refuge in the Ardennes, where they built a fort and named it after the eldest brother Regnault. Other sources say the settlement dates from the feudal wars in the 11th century between the Counts of Blois and the Counts of Anjou. A loyal member of the court of the Count of Blois was charged with the construction of a defensive structure (most likely a simple wooden tower) on the site of the present chateau. He named this defensive structure after his son, Regnault. In any case it became a fief of the counts of Rethel in the Holy Roman Empire, the little fort became a castle and a town developed around it.

The upper Meuse roughly marked the western border of the Holy Roman Empire with the Kingdom of France from 1301 till King Henri II put the three bishoprics, Metz, Toul and Verdun under French military protection in 1552 and the occupation of the Duchy of Lorraine by the forces of King Louis XIII in 1633. The three bishoprics were annexed in 1648.

In 1545, during the Wars against Emperor Charles V, King François I without any legal basis made Château-Regnault a sovereign principality, as part of a policy to create mini-states around the royal territories as an additional protection. On the east

bank of the Meuse, Château-Regnault was geographically, politically and legally part of the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1564, on the death of Prince Jacques de Clèves, Duke of Nevers and Count of Rethel, his sovereign lands in the Empire were divided between two sisters. The eldest, Henriette de Clèves, who had separately inherited the duchy of Nevers and the county of Rethel¹, obtained from this partition only the small principality of Arches-sur-Meuse, located in a mouth of the Meuse opposite the fortified French town of Mézières. Married to Prince Ludovic of Mantua, third son of the reigning duke of Mantua in northern Italy, on her death in 1601 she left the duchies of Nevers and Rethel as well as the small principality of Arches where only one village remained, that of Arches, to her son, Charles de Gonzague de Clèves,. Next to Arches, Charles de Gonzague created in 1606 a new city to which in 1608 he gave the name Charleville. In September 1607 he opened a mint there which he entrusted, under a lease of September 22 and letters patent of January 14, 1608 to Briot, father and son, Didier and Nicolas. The latter was then the *tailleur général des Monnaies de France* (Chief Engraver of French Mints) in Paris where Charles de Gonzague lived and had his official notary.

The younger sister, Catherine de Clèves, received in the partition the principality of Château-Regnault except naturally for the little territory of Arches given to her sister Henriette. After the death of her first husband, the prince of Croy and Château-Porcien, she married in her second wedding Henri de Lorraine, the celebrated Duke of Guise, nicknamed “le Balafre” (Scarface) on account of a wound he had received fighting the Protestants. Catherine de Clèves let her husband administer the principality to which he added the sovereign territory of Linchamps sur la Semoy in 1573. From then on the two territories formed the sovereign principality of Château-Regnault et Linchamps, as they are called in numerous documents of the period. Henri made clear he intended to assert the

full powers of the ruler of a sovereign principality. On April 12 1575 he had his council issue a *Sentence générale des terres souveraines de Château-Regnault*, in which he claimed his right to call himself king or emperor of these territories, with the authority to wear a crown, and declared that he held this right from God alone. He affirmed his right to promulgate edicts, regulations, laws and ordinances and appoint governors and a host of other officials. He could convoke gentlemen and other men of the country to employ them for public security. He could build towns and fortresses, order loans and taxes, establish weights and measures and many other things. Most important for this article, in Article 5 he gave himself the right to strike coinage with his arms. He never made use of this right in his lifetime, while his neighbor, the sovereign prince of Sedan, who bore the title of Duke of Bouillon, began to mint money from 1577. Henri de Lorraine, duke of Guise, sovereign prince of Château-Regnault, was assassinated in Blois on December 23, 1588 on the order of the king of France Henri III whose place he wanted to take.

On July 24, 1605, at the Château de Meudon, Catherine de Clèves married her daughter Louise-Marguerite de Lorraine-Guise, then aged 28, to the Prince de Conty, François de Bourbon-Condé, first cousin of Henri IV who had favored this marriage to bring together the two houses of Bourbon and Lorraine. The Prince of Conty, Henri IV's companion in the Wars of Religion, was then old, widowed, deaf, stuttering to the point of being mute and, it was said at the time, impotent. But he was a prince of the blood, which made it possible to save appearances, as Louise-Marguerite had lived too wild a youth to claim to be able to marry another husband of his rank. On the occasion of this marriage, Catherine de Clèves then gave her daughter as a dowry the sovereign principality of Château-Regnault et Linchamps where, despite the 1575 *Sentence*, neither she nor Henri had ever struck coinage.

The couple, François de Bourbon, prince de Conty and Louise-Marguerite then reigned jointly, from 1605 to 1614, over the principality where they never set foot; Catherine de Clèves and Henri de Guise had done the same before them. During the lifetime of Henri IV they never felt the need to coin money in accordance with the aforementioned *Sentence* of 1575, despite the neighboring coin issues of the Prince of Sedan in Sedan and the bishops of Liège in Bouillon, and despite also the setting up of the mint in Arches in 1607.

However, on January 13, 1610, the prince and princess of Conty granted, by contract made in Paris before notaries of the Châtelet, sieur Aymé Croys, lord of Turquan, residing in Provins in the Brie, the "general lease" of the principality of Château-Regnault and Linchamps. This general lease includes monetary provisions which authorize him to produce all kinds of pieces of gold, silver and others who will be "the best appreciated by merchants". A list specifies several of these coins: gold pistole and half pistole, gold florin, silver rixdalle (rixdaler or thaler) and half rixdalle, coins of 5 sols and 6 blancs "to the standard of the Metz Mint", liards, doubles and deniers which will be "of rosette copper like those of France". A complementary document of January 28, 1610 authorizes the grantee to install "factories" (workshops) for the manufacture of coins.

From 1610 to 1614 the prince and princess of Conty limited their monetary issues, which actually only began in 1613, to the striking of liards (imitating coins from the neighboring Netherlands) and copper double tournois. In 1614 they had a small silver thaler or florin or gulden of XXX sols struck with their two busts which corresponded to the type of half-ducaton struck by the archduke and archduchess in the Spanish Netherlands. They were following the example of their neighbours, the princes of Arches-Charleville and Sedan, who struck similar 30 sols pieces from 1610 in Charleville and from 1612 in Sedan respectively.

The die for this piece may have been engraved by Nicolas Briot 3



Silver florin (or “small Taler”) of 30 sols 1614 39.5 mm 19.61 g 1st issue with dots between words

Obv.: mintmark F.BOVVRBONIVS L. MARGARETA. A. LOTARINGIA within two milled circles The semi-royal crown of princes of the royal blood over facing busts, in exergue .XXX (value). François wears armour and a large ruff collar, the fashion at the time. Louise has a large lace collar, also the fashion in this period, and a pearl necklace and an elegant hairdo.

Rev. IN. OMNEM. TERRAM. SONVS. EORVM (their word may sound in every land). 1614. Crown over ornamented shield with

qtrd. arms of Bourbon-Condé (3 lis with diagonal baton (brisure to indicate cadet member of Bourbon family)) over Alençon (3 lis in bordure of 7 besants) & Lorraine (in 8 fields Aragon (vertical bars), Naples-Sicily (3 eagles), kingdom of Jerusalem (cross potent with lambel, brisure to indicate cadet branch of Lorraine), old Hungary (horizontal bars), Anjou (3 lis in bordure), Gelders (lion l.) Julich (lion r.) & Bar (2 fish) with Lorraine centre escutcheon (diagonal bar with 3 eaglets) , breaking out of circle

There is a second type with fleurons instead of dots as punctuation between the words. Only three of this type are known, each with slight differences. I believe this type was a posthumous issue after the death of François in August 1614.





Nicolas Briot is undoubtedly also the creator of this magnificent 1614 gold pistole, no doubt struck after the death of François de Bourbon in July 1614 since it only shows the name of the princess. The only known example of this exceptional piece is today kept in the Cabinet of Medals of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (French National Library) in Paris, coming from the old royal collection. Already listed in 1686, it is undoubtedly the one that the Princess of Conty gave to the regent Marie de Médicis in November 1614.

On December 5 1614, many foreign currencies were banned in the kingdom of France by Marie de Médicis. This ban covered coins of Arches-Charleville and Sedan as well as the Château-Regnault copper; the 1614 pistole and the florin of XXX sols were spared. Moreover, on December 19, 1616 the Cour des monnaies de Paris (Paris Court of Currency) vigorously renewed the royal decree

pronounced two years earlier. The Princess of Conty was then forced to consider the production of coins other than those which had just been banned. From this requirement, the production of many billon coins was born from 1617, called, according to the designers, dreibätzners (3 Batzen), pieces of 4 sols, 12 kreutzers and 3 kreutzers., imitations of coins of the Empire rather than France. These new denominations took over from the banned copper double tournois and liards.

The Princess of Conty looked out for her financial interests very closely. In order to earn as much money as possible from her coin issues, she did not hesitate to cheat shamelessly, even using the name of her late husband to foil legal action: how could one punish a dead man?

Following the ban of December 1614, she abandoned the production of pistoles and small silver thalers or florins of XXX sols, as well as the copper liards which were in the name of François de Bourbon. However, she continued to strike copper double tournois in 1615, quickly replaced by others without a date. These pieces appear in drawings, called handprints at the time, or vignettes, in the royal decrees of 1614 and 1616. On several occasions, between 1617 and 1625, the King of France or his Cours de monnaies in Paris had to issue bans of these double tournois without a date struck fraudulently in the name and with the effigy of the deceased prince de Conty. In 1617 the princess also had to stop striking silver $\frac{1}{4}$ ecus, imitations of the French $\frac{1}{4}$ ecu, since her coin was referred to in the text and the prints of the decree of the Cours de monnaies of December 1616.

In 1617, following this decree, she made a concession of her principality's mint to a new moneyer, Paul Manlich or Manlick, well known in the Ardennes. The man in question had indeed been director of the Mint of Sedan, as well as that of the Bishop of Liège at Bouillon. He brought with him a very sulphurous reputation as a counterfeiter. To date, we have not been able to find

the leases or terms that were granted to Manlick to strike coins in the principality of Château-Regnault. We know however, thanks to Adrien Blanchet, that on April 23, 1619 Louise-Marguerite de Lorraine, princess of Conty, sovereign of Château-Regnault and Linchamps, confirmed to Paul Manlick the previous concessions which she had granted him, to produce gold or silver coins with the arms of the princess, in whole or in part, on one side, and on the other a double or simple eagle with the names of the saints of the parishes of the principality. No coins with saints are known so perhaps this was just a cover for striking coins with all sorts of coats of arms. These coins were not used in the principality but the subjects of Louise-Marguerite could traffic them with foreign merchants.

This vital information, together with the accounts we have of the principality of Château-Regnault and Linchamps, allows us to reconstruct the diabolical financial mechanism built up on the back of the coin issues imagined by the princess and the ingenious Manlich.

1 °) The main income of the sovereign lands of Château-Regnault and Linchamps was ensured, apart from the exploitation of the forests, by tolls collected at Château-Regnault on the Meuse as well as at Linchamps on the Semoy.

If the payment of tolls by the users of the main commercial communication route between the Netherlands and the United Provinces on the one hand, and Northern Italy with its maritime trade to Barcelona on the other, were made in pieces of gold, change would be given in below standard silver or billon coins. The necessary coins had to be similar to those in common circulation at the time in Europe: in the Empire, in the Netherlands and in the United Provinces, in Northern Italy, etc.

Such is the case with the pieces of 4 sols, called "sols" in the Verdussen *tarifs* (list of values of coins) of 1627 and 1633, which show prints of a very large number of these pieces struck by cities

or states. These coins show on one side the imperial eagle, on the other the issuer (city, country, etc.). The 12 kreutzer and 3 kreutzer coins, where the value is indicated, do not appear in the *Verdussen tarifs* : given their stated value, they could only circulate in the Empire where soon certain cities would ban them: Frankfurt in 1618, Strasbourg in 1619. For the princess and Manlich, this massive production of pieces of 4 sols, also called *dreibätzner*, 12 kreutzers and 3 kreutzers, was extremely lucrative. But after the decrees banning these coins, they were obliged to give up production in 1619-1620.

Most of these coins have a simple indication of CHA for Château-Regnault or LINC (LIN, LI) for Linchamps. Some show the portrait of François de Bourbon. The 1617 or 1619 dates are very rare. A coin without a date shows the legend L.M.L. = Louise-Marguerite de Lorraine. The small 3 kreutzer coins are in the name of Louise-Marguerite.

2 °) The pieces of gold received in the principality at the tolls allowed gold florins to be struck after melting. These generally bear the two names of François de Bourbon and Louise-Marguerite de Lorraine but they only show the unchanged bust of the prince on each issue (various dies). We can conclude from the observation of several indications that they were all struck after the death of François de Bourbon with perhaps the exception of a type in the name of the Prince of Conty alone.

To this first fraud concerning the effigy there was added a second, the title of florins “of gold”, of which there was very little.

Manlich was probably also responsible for a unique undated Rixdaler in the Cabinet des médailles, struck around 1617, following the example of the Taler of 45 sols he struck in Sedan in 1616. This coin has an interesting feature in that the 3 lis Bourbon arms omit the brisure indicating that François is from the junior branch of the family. Using the king's arms was totally illegal and the person who did it could be accused of *lèse-majesté*. The

Lorraine arms also lack the brisure. The other interesting feature is that the coin was machine-made using the roller die technique. The 1614 30 sols was also machine-made.



Here is a detailed description of the coin:

Obv.: mintmark FR. BOVRBONIVS. LVD. MARGARETA. A. LOTH ARIN between two milled circles . Armoured bust of François de Bourbon-Condé rt., with a ruff collar and a motif (lion's head ?) on right shoulder.

Rev.: IN. OMNEM. TERRAM. SONVS. EORVM mintmark between two milled circles Crowned ornamented qtrd. arms of France (3 lis) over France (3 lis) – instead of Bourbon-Condé and Alençon - & Lorraine (in 8 fields Aragon, Naples-Sicily, kingdom of Jerusalem (cross potent but without the lambel indicating cadet branch of Lorraine), old Hungary, Anjou, Gelders, Julich & Bar with Lorraine centre escutcheon, breaking out of circle

These incorrect arms also appear on a billon coin of 1616 discovered in 2009.

Louise-Marguerite de Lorraine was the last ruler of Château-Regnault. Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII's powerful and capable minister, wanted to get rid of the small independent territories on France's frontiers and reinforce royal power with the control of a frontier on the river Meuse. He started negotiations with the princess in 1625 and Louise-Marguerite finally sold Château-Regnault to the King on March 10 1629 in return for the territory of Pont-sur-Seine inside the French kingdom, some German territories and over 1,400,000 livres in cash.

STUDY OF THE 12 KREUTZER PIECES

My study of the 12 Kreuzers shows, like the 4 sol coins, a large number of coins with many varieties of legends, numerous mule-like mixtures of coins and a great fantasy of coats of arms.

On a certain number of Château-Regnault coins we see clearly the arms of François de Bourbon and Louise-Marguerite or the sole arms of the princess, the arms of the house of Lorraine; that is the case of the 1614 pistole, the gold florins and the ¼ écus. The copper liards and double tournois show only François' arms, as do

the billon douzains. But the coins that imitate Lorraine gold florins or French types did not have the same destination nor the same use as the 4 sols and 12 Kreuzer coins.

On one side we have the Imperial double eagle, on the other side the arms: these are sometimes correct but more often fantasies. This fantasy in the designs was a protection against reputational attacks or legal proceedings, made more difficult by the impossibility of identifying the issuer of the discredited coin.



This unpublished example submitted to us gives rise to the following observations:

1 °) The side of the imperial eagle with the orb with the value 12 (= 12 kreutzers) is accompanied by the well-known legend frequently found on pieces of 4 sols and 12 kreutzers: SUB UMBRA ALARVM TVARVM, under the shade of your wings (those of the eagle, but also by extension under divine protection).

2 °) The side with the coat of arms has the legend MONETA NOVA ARG. CHAST. 1617, meaning "New Money of Château-Regnault" issued in 1617. This is therefore a coin from the beginning of the issuance of 4 sols and 12 kreutzers.

The coat of arms depicted in the shield is fanciful. We see a mixture of the arms of Julich or Gelders (lions), Jerusalem (cross), Aragon (vertical bars) and ancient Hungary (horizontal bars). The princes and princesses of the house of Lorraine, to which Louise-Marguerite belonged, did indeed have all these fields in their coat of arms but in a quite different order. These arms are a fantasy.

In his study of the 4 sol, 12 kreutzer and 3 kreutzer pieces, Arthur Engel wrote (*Revue numismatique*, 1885, page 304, no. 2) that one should not "seek heraldic truth in these coats of arms, composed of quarters taken from anywhere, and assembled in such a way as to deceive the eye". The Oldenburg Schilling in the Verdussen *tarifs* of 1627 and 1633 is a very good example in this regard. Here is an example:



The obverse legend, MO NOVA_ARG_ORDINE: (O.L . illegible) B.R, although not totally legible on this coin, implies the coin is from Oldenburg. The crowned quartered arms are a variation of the Oldenburg arms: the horizontal bars of Oldenburg but with a French lis instead of the original Delmenhorst cross, and the lion rampant of Jever. However, the reverse legend NISI.TV DOMINE NOBISCVM.EPVS (error for FRVS: if thou art not with us, Lord, all is in vain) does not appear on Oldenburg coins but is copied from a coin from the Groningen Ommelanden in the Netherlands.



Engel's second study (*Revue numismatique*, 1886, p. 390, n ° 2) shows a piece of 4 sols with a coat of arms very similar to the 12 kreutzers above. The arms are in a slightly different order. For Engel, the arms represented are those of Hungary, Gelders, Jerusalem and Aragon and he adds that the general design was chosen to imitate the coins of the city of Campen in the Netherlands. We agree with Engel, except that the lion, which for him is for Gelders, may also be for Julich. Finally, it should be

mentioned that the Campen 4 sols were counterfeited at the time, as indicated in the Verdussen *tarifs*.



P.S. I was just finishing this article when a private collector in the United States brought to my attention, through our friend Arnaud Clairand, this piece of 4 sols which we think we can attribute to the Linchamps mint because of the final separate L at the end of the obverse legend MONETA*NOVA*ARGENT*L* (new silver

money). The quartered arms in the shield are : 1st. qtr. Julich-Gelders (facing lions rampant); 2nd.qtr. ancient Hungary (horizontal bars); 3rd.qtr. Jerusalem (cross) and 4th.qtr. Julich (lion l.) Furthermore, the central cross dividing the four quarters resembles that on the coins of Robert de Lenoncourt , Bishop of Metz, in the 1550s. The reverse legend VERBVM.DOMINI.MANET.IN.ETERNVM (the word of the Lord remains in eternity) appears on 16th century Saxony coins.

Footnotes

1. The county of Rethel was raised to a duchy for Louis and Henriette
2. She was born in 1577 and not in 1588 as often stated in error.
3. Cf. Malherbe, cited by Christian Charlet in 1987.
4. Taking account of its position since the Gelders lion usually faces the other direction.

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Duby, Pierre-Ancher Tobiesen: *Monnoies des prélats et barons de France* (Paris 1786)

Engel, Arthur: *Imitations monétaires de Château-Regnault* (Paris, Revue numismatique, 1885, p. 296ff.; 1886, p. 387ff. ; 1887, p. 181ff.)

Abbé Péchenart: *Château-Regnault Bogny* (Charleville 1897)

Verdussen, Hieronymus : [Carte ou liste contenant le prix de chacun marcq once estrelin & as poids de Troyes de toutes les espèces d'or et d'argent deffendues legieres ou trop usées & moyennant ce déclarées pour billion selon l'ordonnance de sa Majesté faite par les Generaulx des monnoyes au mois de mars 1627](#) (Tarifs Verdussen) (Antwerp 1627)

Verdussen, Hieronymus : *Ordonnance et instruction Selon laquelle se doivent conduire & regler dorenavant les Changeurs ou Collecteurs des pieces d'or & d'argent deffendues, rognées, legieres ou trop usées* (Antwerp 1633)

Collection Alain Tissière (CGB/CGF Bid Sale, December 2002)

Note: the original French version of this article was published on April 4 2019 in the Blog of cgb.fr, a leading Paris numismatic firm, and also in their Bulletin Numismatique No. 185. This version has been edited to include more background information on Château-Regnault and some further information on the coins from 2 articles published by Christian Charlet in January & February 2020 in the BSFN (see References).

Numismatics International Reaches a Milestone: 100th NI Mail Bid

Numismatics International has held two Mail Bids annually for the benefit of our members for the past 50 years. The May 2021 Mail Bid is the 100th such Mail Bid. This is one of the benefits of membership since it allows members to sell numismatic items which they no longer wish to keep, and makes those items available to other members who may wish to add to their collection.

NI Mail Bid #100 will have over 500 lots. It is composed of four sections:

1. Over 100 proof sets and proof coins, mint sets and medals
- 2.. Twenty-two gold coins and over 200 other individual coins
3. Over 100 groups or collections of coins
4. A few Chinese banknotes

Because of the volatility of Gold and Silver, bids can be made by email with the link to the NI Auction Committee Form on the NI website.

Bids must be received by the Auction Committee no later than 6:00PM on Monday, June 14, 2021.

NI reserves the right to reject any bid for any reason, including if it is considered to be too low for the seller.